Media Design Standards
A Checklist for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Interpretive Media

Interpretive design should provoke revelation about a place, idea or object. These are questions to ask yourself as you look at various interpretive media.

Content

— Does it engage your interest and imagination, inspire and provoke thought?

— Does it aim to present a whole rather than a part?

— Is it accurate, insightful, and does it reflect the integrity, authority, management, and voice of the organization it represents?

— Does it reinforce the identity of the agency utilizing existing standards to establish expectations among a general audience, conveying a reassuring sense of familiarity, continuity, and ease in finding information?

— Does it display sound ideas?

— Does it provide information about vital environmental and preservation issues and broaden awareness of the need for protection of natural and cultural heritage?

— Does it express multiple perspectives?

— Is it site specific?

Organization

— Is there a clear hierarchy of information? Does it visually stratify or layer complex information?

— Is there a continuity of style, and correlation between text, map, and graphic elements?

— Is it easy to use and to navigate through? Can you find categories of information easily? Are there familiar patterns of reference for you to find the information you need?

Appearance

— Does it engage your interest and imagination, inspire and provoke thought?

— Are the visual elements supportive or do they distract from the core message?

— Does it visually convey the message, or confuse it? Is the design rooted in the content, message or interpretive theme?

— How much reading did you do before you understood the main point?

— How long did it take you to understand the main interpretive message?

— Is it executed with superb craftsmanship of color, typography, composition, graphic use, lighting, placement?

— Does it integrate high-quality elements (graphics, text, etc.) into a seamless whole?

— Does it attract the visitor without competing with or detracting from park resources?

— Is there a visual continuity among media at the site?

— Does the media appear cost effective and appropriate for the message?

Interpretive Techniques

— Does it engage your interest and imagination, inspire and provoke thought?

— Does it relate to your experience at the site?

— Does it cause a revelation based on information?

— Does it demonstrate why something matters?

— Does it link tangible elements (media and park resources) to intangible ideas and concepts? Does it help you make connections to the meaning and significance of the site?

— Is it an appropriate medium to convey the message? Is the design appropriate for different learning styles and is it universally accessible?

— Is there continuity among all media at the site?